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ABSTRACT

This report provides the results of a survey conducted by the Southwest Research Team whose goal was to provide information concerning the issues and concerns of young people in Southwest Portland. The study was part of an attempt to set a foundation for an on-going process of involving Southwest Portland youth in the planning activities of the Southwest Youth Service Center. The information collected by the survey was to be used by the youth to formulate policy, develop programs, and evaluate programs during the year. The survey focused on the following areas: school, police-youth relations, attitudes toward the Southwest Youth Service Center, health, employment, housing and leisure activities. The first three areas listed were designated as priority. Respondents came from four sources: high school youth, youth enrolled in the Portland Job Corps Center, youth working at the Jewish Community Center, and friends of the research team itself. Thirty-five females and twenty-six males participated. Several of the goals of the project were accomplished. It was demonstrated that a group of youth could be brought together, work as a group, and deal in a constructive way with some very complex social problems. The attempt to blend education, training, and work into the organization of the research project proved to be successful. (Author/AM)

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SURVEY OF YOUTH NEEDS IN SOUTHWEST PORTLAND

(Research Report No. 1)

Summer, 1976

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Youth Service Center
6950 S.W. Capitol Hwy.
Portland, Oregon 97219

School of Urban Affairs
Portland State University
Portland, Oregon 97207

UD017483

Preface

This research project was a joint effort between the Southwest Portland Youth Service Center, the Southwest Youth Manpower Program, and Portland State University. The research was carried out by Southwest Portland youth, with the assistance of faculty and graduate students from Portland State University. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the Youth Research Team, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the agencies sponsoring the research.

The Youth Research Team would like to acknowledge the assistance and cooperation rendered by the following persons and organizations, without whose help this research would not have been possible: the staff at Wilson High School, especially Dr. Roy Malo, principal at Wilson, and Mr. Robert Brown, the Work Experience Coordinator; the National Council of Jewish Women, particularly Ms. Leslie Eisenstein; the City of Portland, Human Resources Bureau; and Youth Services Division Director, Leon Johnson. Finally, and most importantly, we would like to thank the youth of southwest Portland who took time to share their opinions and attitudes about youth needs in their community.

Michael Wiatrowski
Gerald F. Blake
Florence Yospe
Tammie Davies
Tim Hill
Karen Lane
Scott Steinfeld
Jule Scroggs
Jeff Metzner

August, 1976

Introduction

Programs which are designed to serve young people, like most social service programs, share a common weakness in that they are often developed and operated without participation or input from the population which they are intended to serve. The 1960's and early 1970's were marked as an era when many groups, such as minority populations, welfare recipients, the elderly, and the handicapped, coalesced and organized in order to gain recognition for the legitimacy of their claims of inequality, powerlessness, and exclusion from decisions which affected their lives. Some of these groups have been moderately successful in changing these undersirable conditions. Ethnic minorities and the elderly, for example, have in recent years been able to play an increasingly important role in designing programs to meet goals which they have helped to formulate. Young people, however, have not in any sense shared in the success which these other groups have achieved, and as such, remain disenfranchised. The nature of this disenfranchisement is important because it contains implicit assumptions about youth and their capabilities to participate in decision-making which affects their lives. The prevailing view appears similar to arguments voiced in the past concerning the poor, the uneducated, and the non-white. That is, young people are not seen as being capable, or responsible, or mature enough to make important decisions. Youth, like other minorities, are said not to take problems "seriously": that they are caught up in the psychology of "now," and lack an orientation to defer reward or gratification. These assumptions have been used to buttress practices that not only exclude youth from participation in areas that affect their present circumstance, but also deny them an important educational and political experience. The problem with these assumptions is that they are both

faulty and dangerous, and result in the creation of programs which are at best ineffective, and at worst harmful to the youth served by them.

Whereas, in the past, youth have been expected to be the passive recipients of services, there has been some important redirection in youth programming based on a re-examination of the capabilities of youth, and upon the role of youth in society. The impetus for the redirection or "liberation" of programs dealing with youth has come from a number of directions.

First, there is a growing recognition that many youth serving programs have failed to develop an explicit set of assumptions upon which they operate, and by which they can be evaluated, and thus be held accountable to their various constituencies. Many youth programs seem to operate in a state of drift, responding to daily pressures, or "crisis" situations, rather than along the lines of a predefined conception of the problem which the program is supposed to be confronting, or an explicitly defined method of intervention to which the program subscribes. Moreover, evaluative questions relating to how well a program is meeting the needs of youth, including a means for soliciting the views of youths themselves, are almost totally non-existent.

Secondly, and partially as a result of operating without a clearly defined conception of the problem, many youth programs have fallen into a clinical "trap." That is, programs which were originally designed to represent the needs of all young people have, in reality, become programs only for "troubled youth." Essentially what this means is that a young person has to evidence some behavioral or emotional problem in order to come to the attention of the program. What often times happens in this situation is that a program comes to be seen by

youth as a "spoiled image" program. In other words youth who come into contact with the program are "tagged" or labeled as problematic by others. The end result of this process is that the program's "clients" are viewed in terms of their unique problem (i.e., emotionally disturbed, culturally deficient, delinquent) rather than as evidencing symptoms of much larger problems which are shared by all young people (i.e., low availability of meaningful employment, little voice in decision-making).

It is important to emphasize the universal nature or commonality of youth problems. The gross indicators of the failure of both service and policy are evidenced by figures such as: increasing substance and alcohol abuse, youth unemployment, school dropout rates and delinquency. These problems are in themselves significant, but when they are taken together they present a picture of a generation of young people who are the victims of a failure of public policy and the institutions which carry out that policy. The dimensions of these problems are simply too great to attempt to locate the causes in alleged deficiencies of individual youth. Yet this is precisely what many youth programs attempt to do. In the end much of this discussion would probably be resolved if it could be demonstrated that youth serving agencies were successful in accomplishing their goals, where defined. Yet there is little evidence of success despite the best intentions of youth program staff.

So it would seem then, that a major task confronting youth program planners is keeping the program "on track," that is, pointed in directions that address issues and concerns that affect all youth, and to avoid the pitfalls of responding to youth problems by "treating" individuals as the source of the problem. Such an effort is not easy. The traditional view of youth, even with all of its weaknesses, is persuasive, reaching into the operational and organizational

philosophies of schools, the juvenile justice system, employment services, and community policy-making bodies. One important way to keep a youth program "on track" is to establish a means by which youth can participate in the planning and evaluation of the program. Such a procedure would guard against the possibility of the concerns of youth being shuffled aside, in fact, involving youth in program planning insures the presence of a "youth perspective."

This research project is an attempt to set the foundation for an on-going process of involving southwest Portland youth in the planning activities of the Southwest Youth Service Center. The endeavor views young people as having been excluded from important decision-making, interprets this as a failure, and attributes this failure to institutions, mainly the schools, which have not provided youth with a forum for reasoned debate on important issues, nor assisted youth in developing the facilities for critical thinking. The research project is based on the assumption that young people do have something to say, and that their analysis of problems that confront them is valid. The project also assumes that youth, when given the opportunity and leadership support, can acquire the skills and information that are required to make responsible decisions about their lives, and the institutions which affect them.

Creation of a Youth Research Team

In the Spring of 1976 a series of meetings were held between Dr. Gerald Blake of Portland State University, and Ms. Sarah Newhall, Director of the Southwest Youth Service Center. The purpose of these meetings was to explore ways in which the Youth Service Center could involve youth more actively in the

planning and development of center activities. The Center did have six youth positions on its advisory board, but it was felt that increased youth involvement, in the form of employing youth to work in the center, and undertaking an effort to "poll" the larger population of Southwest youth would result in program planning that was more "relevant" to youth needs, and at the same time would expand the Center's base of community support. It was decided that a youth research team could be formed to work within the Center to carry out a preliminary community-youth needs assessment survey. The data from this pilot study would be used as a base for an expanded needs survey which would in turn be used for future Center program planning. The Youth Manpower Program, which is housed in the same building as the Youth Service Center, was then approached, and asked to support the youth research team concept by providing salaries for the youth to be employed. After some negotiation concerning work schedules, size of the research team, and job descriptions, the Youth Manpower Program coordinator agreed to provide financial support for the research effort.

The agreement that was reached provided for six youth research positions, paying $2.30 per hour, for 20 hours of work per week, for a ten week period during the summer. It was also agreed that the Youth Manpower Program and the Center would each recruit two youth for the team, and that a local high school would recruit for the remaining two positions. It was also arranged that the youth researchers could receive school credit for their participation in the project. This was done through negotiations with the administrators of a local high school. The only employment criteria that was established for the researcher position was that a youth show an interest in being involved in the work. It was

felt that the research team should be comprised of a "mix" of youth; varying in age, sex and educational background. The result of the recruitment process was a research team comprised equally of males and females, with ages ranging from 15 to 18 years, and included youth from the Sophomore through Senior year at high school as well as high school dropouts and graduates. Portland State University's role was to supervise the overall research effort, act as strategists for the research team, and provide educational support for the youth researchers. The role of strategist involved leading group discussions, suggesting areas for inquiry, focusing research interests, and providing alternative research methodologies to the group. Educational support for the team was provided by giving over a portion of the work week to informal discussions and presentations on matters related to the conduct of social research, and social problems.

Operationalization of the Youth Research Concept

The idea of employing youth as researchers, to carry out an important research activity, required that three things occur in order to translate the idea into an operational program.

First, it was important that the youth acquire the methodological skills which would enable them to carry out the several phases of the research.

Second, it was necessary to create a positive work atmosphere, based on a different set of assumptions about the ability of youth to perform demanding and responsible work, to set goals, and to participate in project decision-making. As we stated previously, in traditional settings the contributions of young people to group processes are not often considered important, and participation in decision-making is many times not encouraged.

Third, the youth researchers needed to develop a conceptual framework, grounded in empirical and theoretical knowledge, which would enable them to place the myriad of youth problems into perspective so that the research would be well focused, insuring that useful data could be derived from the study.

The Nature of the Research

The main purpose of the research was to provide information to the Southwest Youth Service Center which would be used to formulate policy, develop programs, and evaluate programs during the coming year. The steps involved in providing this type of information are similar to those followed in many other social research projects. In essence then, the youths would be given an introduction to social science research.

The first problem to be confronted by the research team was that of deciding which areas or issues to investigate. The constraints of time and resources made it necessary to focus the research as much as possible upon problem areas that were: 1) relevant to the needs of Southwest youth, and 2) of a scope that would allow for Youth Service Center program planning. It became obvious that in reconciling these demands, some areas of interest would be left unexamined.

The first meetings of the research team were therefore given over to discussing what kinds of information would be required by the Youth Service Center for the purpose of program planning. This discussion was placed in a more general context concerning problems which most young people confront in their lives. After some deliberation, the research team decided to focus the needs survey on several areas: school, police-youth relations, attitudes toward the Southwest Youth Service Center, health, employment, housing, and leisure activities. The

areas of school, police-youth relations, and attitudes toward the Center were designated as the priority areas for study. Questions relating to the remaining issues would be included in the survey, but that data would not be analyzed unless time permitted.

Once the general areas to be studied were identified, the team went through a process of specifying further each problem area. While the object of the research was not to test specific research hypotheses, it was necessary to narrow the areas under study, so that they could be adequately addressed within the resource limitations of the study, and at the same time provide useful information. This was accomplished by each member of the team selecting a problem area, and then developing a list of questions for that area. The questions submitted by each group member were then discussed by the group, modified where necessary, and additional questions added to insure that each area was covered completely. The group attempted to design questions that were unambiguous, so that they could be understood by the persons responding to the survey. After this process was completed for each problem area, the questions were compiled to form the basis for the questionnaire. Interviewing instructions were added, and a draft of the survey instrument was readied for pre-testing.

Prior to pre-testing the questionnaire, a guest lecturer was invited to meet with the research team to discuss the problems of survey interviewing. After discussing such issues as the need to develop a rapport with the person being interviewed, the confidentiality of responses, and the necessity of avoiding leading questions, the youth conducted practice interviews with each other and thus accomplished the training and pre-test function at the same time. Revisions were made where questions failed to elicit clear responses or where questions were confusing in the way they were worded. (See Appendix A for the final version of the questionnaire.)

Once the questionnaire was developed discussions were initiated concerning the population of youth which was to be surveyed by the team. It was noted that frequently surveys of youth had a tendency to focus on populations which were most accessible, such as young people who were in school, while youth who were more difficult to reach such as school dropouts or working youth were not surveyed. The research team felt this to be an important problem, and endeavored to include as wide a range of youth as possible to avoid sample bias. It was recognized that it was beyond the capability of the research team to select a simple random sample of youths from the Southwest Portland. Instead it was decided to identify specific groups of young people who should be included in the study. The groups which were identified as being important were: young people who were working, as well as youth who were unemployed; youth presently going to school and youth who had dropped out. The utility of this method was that it identified specific populations of young people who could be approached and interviewed for the purpose of the study. It was hoped that a greater measure of representativeness could be attained through this alternative, yet equally legitimate method of sampling.

Finally, the area of data analysis was addressed by the team. It was recognized that merely having an accumulation of data was not sufficient in and of itself. The problem of deriving conclusions which were consistant with the intent and constraints of the questionnaire was discussed. A closely related concern was that of not making recommendations which went beyond the limitations of the study.

The final goal of the project was to convey to the group an understanding and awareness of the problems which young people confront and to assist them in

developing a theoretical framework with which to analyze and propose solutions for those problems. The youth researchers demonstrated a high level of awareness and concern with their education, careers, interaction with the police, and so forth. Yet these concerns were explicated in a fairly disjointed fashion. From an educational perspective this process involved discussions of the role of young people in American society, what their place is in the economy, their relation to the educational system as consumers of goods and services, alcohol and drug abuse, leisure and recreational activities and so forth. Out of this immensely complex subject an attempt was made to crystalize their awareness of the problems which confront them and then to develop an understanding of the interrelatedness of many of these topics. Instead of attempting to deal with the schools separate and apart from its educational theory, the congruity between the two was discussed. In a similar manner, alcohol and drug abuse were discussed as symptoms of institutional problems, and were characterized as attempts by young people to find alternate means of personal fulfillment. While these topics were broached only superficially it presented an opportunity for continued discussion, which led to a more detailed examination of the problems which young people confront, and the interconnectedness of those problems.

The Sampling Process and Description of the Sample

Respondents for the Community-Youth Needs Survey came from four sources: youth attending summer classes at Lincoln, Benson, and Wilson High Schools; youth enrolled in the Portland Job Corps Center; youth working at the Jewish Community Center; and friends and contacts of the research team itself. From these sources sixty-one youth were contacted and interviewed. The study population included 35 females and 26 males. Of the 61 respondents, the greatest proportion

(87 percent) were white, with blacks, Asian Americans, and native Americans making up the remainder of the sample (see Table 1). The research team's effort to contact specific groups of youth to be included in the sample was only partially successful. Most of the youth interviewed were students (87 percent), while school dropouts made up only 13 percent of the sample. Sixty-six percent of the youth responding to the survey were employed, either full or part time, while 44 percent classified themselves as unemployed. It should be pointed out that most of the youth who were working were only doing so for the summer months. Thus, it is probable that the study population under-represents youth who work full-time on a year-round basis. Other limitations of the sample are that it probably over-represents the in-school youth population, and under-represents minority youth. It was obvious that the youth research team encountered similar problems relating to representativeness of the study sample as others who undertake social research.

Findings of the Exploratory Survey

A. School

The survey contained a number of questions concerning attitudes towards education, student involvement in decision-making, and student discipline. The research team thought it important that the school be a major focus of the survey since this institution plays such an important role in the lives of young people.

Of the 61 youth interviewed for the study, 67 percent said that they liked school. This is an interesting finding, for it sort of runs against the general

TABLE 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE OF SOUTHWEST PORTLAND YOUTH

	Percent	Number
SEX		
Male	43	(26)
Female	57	(35)
Total	100%	N=61
ETHNICITY		
White	86	(53)
Black	2	(1)
Native American	10	(6)
Asian American	2	(1)
Total	100%	N=61
EDUCATIONAL STATUS		
In-School	87	(53)
Out-of-School	13	(8)
Total	100%	N=61

impression conveyed by teachers and school administrators that youth don't seem to be interested in their education. But this finding in itself is not complete. Although two-thirds of the youth liked school, it is the case that an even greater proportion of those responding to the survey felt that students should be more involved in the school's decision-making process. Nearly nine in ten of the youth interviewed, for example, felt that students should have a role in the curriculum development process (see Table 2). In the same vein, three out of four respondents indicated that students should be involved in such matters as textbook selection, teacher evaluation, and school budget deliberations. On the matter of teacher hiring, promotion, and dismissal there was also considerable interest in having students involved. Nearly half of the youth we talked to voiced the opinion that students should be involved in promotion and retention decisions. To a slightly lesser degree, this was also the case for teacher hiring, with one in three respondents favoring greater student involvement.

An interpretation that can be applied to these findings is that young people are interested in their education, and are even more interested in improving their education, both in terms of curriculum and in its organization. The view that young people are only interested in schooling to the extent that it assists them in obtaining a job is not supported by this survey. When asked if school should only concentrate on those things relevant to earning a living three out of five (64 percent) youth responded negatively. Despite the high level of interest shown by students in their education, it was disturbing to find that almost half

TABLE 2

YOUTH ATTITUDES ABOUT SCHOOL AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

(figures in percent)

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	(NUMBER)
Do You Like School?	67%	25%	8%	100%	(61)
Should Students Be Involved In:					
hiring teachers	36	56	8	100	(61)
teacher promotion	49	43	8	100	(61)
budget decisions	70	20	10	100	(61)
curriculum development	87	5	8	100	(61)
textbook selection	72	20	8	100	(61)
teacher evaluation	80	10	10	100	(61)
teacher dismissal	51	38	11	100	(61)
Should School Concentrate Only on Those Areas Which Will Help You Earn a Living?	29	64	7	100	(61)

(47 percent) of the youth surveyed had experienced discipline problems at school (see Table 3). Most of the youth who encountered difficulty with school rules were suspended, while only a small proportion (8 percent) were actually expelled. This would seem to indicate that many of the discipline problems involve minor infractions of student conduct codes. When asked to comment on the subject of school discipline, nearly half of the sample (47 percent) felt that there was too much emphasis on discipline in school, and that students are often presumed guilty of an infraction until proven innocent.

The findings of the survey suggest several options for Youth Service Center programming. The center should consider expanding its influence with local schools in an effort to make them more responsive to youth needs and interests. These efforts might take the form of advocating for increased student involvement in decision-making, or helping schools to create more active roles for students, such as teacher aides, tutors, and curriculum developers. The purpose of these efforts would be to capture students' interests in education, and channel that interest into meaningful directions.

The area of student discipline needs more attention. It may be the case that the large proportion of school discipline problems are in part a response to the passive nature of the student role. If this is true, then a possible solution to this problem would be form work groups, comprised of students, teachers, and school administrators to review student conduct codes, and to make revisions where necessary. The purpose of such an activity would be to allow students to "share in the ownership" of school rules. The assumption here is that students would be more willing to subscribe to rules and regulations that they helped to formulate, rather than ones that are "imposed" from above.

TABLE 3

YOUTH ATTITUDES ABOUT STUDENT DISCIPLINE

(figures in percent)

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	(NUMBER)*
Have You Ever Had a Discipline Problem at School?	47%	45%	8%	100%	(53)
Have You Ever Been Suspended From School?	43	49	8	100	(53)
Have You Ever Been Expelled?	8	79	13	100	(53)
Do You Think There Is Too Much Emphasis on Discipline at School?	47	42	11	100	(53)
Are Students Presumed Guilty Until Proven Innocent?	58	34	8	100	(53)

* These questions were asked only of "in-school" youth, N = 53.

B. Police-Youth Relations

Police-youth contact, and young people's perceptions of the police were considered an important area of study. The effects of involvement with the juvenile justice system upon youth have been of considerable concern to policy makers and youth program planners alike. It has been shown, for example that contact with the justice system often times has a negative impact which carries over to other areas of a young person's life, such as school, work and peer associations.

The survey contained a number of questions which attempted to guage the amount of police contact with youth, and to determine the nature of those contacts. Regarding the first matter, there appears to be a significant amount of police contact among the sample interviewed for the study. Seven in ten youth (71 percent) said that they had been stopped or detained by a police officer (see Table 4). Moreover, thirty-nine percent of those who had contact with the police described it as a "bad" experience. Whether that negative description is due to the demeanor of the police officer, or to the fear that often accompanies being singled out by law enforcers, is not entirely clear, but a majority of the youth we spoke to felt that they were being "hassled" by police, and expressed the perception that police enforce laws differently for youth than for adults.

When the reasons for police contact are examined, a fairly predictable pattern emerges. The most frequent reason cited for police contact was for alledged status violations. Thirty-one percent of the youth who had a police contact listed status offenses as the reason for being stopped (see Table 5). The largest single status violation was being out after curfew, with hitch-hiking and running away following in a distant second. Drug and alcohol violations

POLICE-YOUTH RELATIONS

(figures in percent)

	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL	(NUMBER)
Have You Had Any Contact With the Police?	70%	23%	7%	100%	(61)
Have You Had "Bad" Experiences With Police?	39	33	28	100%	(61)
Do Police "Hassle" Youth?	56	26	18	100%	(61)
Do Police Enforce Laws Differently for Youth Than for Adults?	56	25	19	100%	(61)

TABLE 5

REASONS FOR POLICE CONTACT

(N = 43)*

	Number	Percent
Status Offenses (Total)	22	31%
Curfew (15)		
Truancy (1)		
Runaway (3)		
Hitch hiking (3)		
Drugs	7	10
Alcohol	10	14
Felony Offense	10	14
Misdemeanor Offense	3	4
Traffic Violation	10	14
Did Not Know	3	4
Other	6	9
Total Contacts	71*	100%

*A youth may have been stopped for more than one reason (i.e., curfew and speeding) or may have had police contact on more than one occasion. This accounts for the total number of police contacts being larger than the number of respondents in the sample.

accounted for 24 percent of the police contacts, and traffic violations accounted for another 10 percent. Felony offenses, violations that pertain to adults as well as youth, accounted for fourteen percent of the police contacts.

The role that the Youth Service Center takes in dealing with police-youth problems depends to a large extent on the perspective which is taken in interpretating the reasons for youthful misconduct. If a clinical view is adopted, which in essence says that problematic behavior is caused by maladjusted youth, then the Youth Service Center would respond by providing counseling, and other individual treatment approaches, to youth. On the other hand, if the relatively large amount of police-youth contact is interpreted as being symptomatic of larger, more complex problems, including the creation of laws which restrict the mobility of youth, and patterns of institutionally reinforced passivity, then the response of the Youth Service Center will be a different one. For example, the Center could be an advocate, working with groups of youth, for the repeal of many of the antiquated status laws which make most youth vulnerable to contact with police. At the same time, the center could initiate an educational effort aimed at police officers, with the intention of sensitizing police to the problems confronting young people. The police would be a valuable ally in moving towards institutional reform, since they encounter on a daily basis, the "fallout" of defective institutions, such as the school, and the world of work.

C. Attitudes Toward the Youth Service Center

The Community-Youth Needs Survey contained a number of specific questions concerning the Southwest Youth Service Center. The inquiry focused on three areas which were considered important to the Center's program planning: 1) the Youth Service Center's visability in the community; 2) youth perceptions of the Center's activities; and 3) youth attitudes about needs or problem areas that should be addressed by the Center.

On the first score the Youth Service Center appears to stand up well. Nearly eight in ten youth surveyed (79 percent) were aware of the Center's existence (see Table 6). Moreover, a majority of the youth interviewed demonstrated an awareness of several of the Center's functions. For example, sixty-six percent of the respondents were aware that the Center provided counseling services to youth, fifty-eight percent were aware that employment services were available at the Center, and fifty-one percent felt that the Center performed a youth advocacy function in the community. The Youth Service Center's diversion function was also fairly widely known, with forty-three percent of the respondents being aware that the Center accepts as referrals, non-serious offenders from the juvenile justice system.

The survey then shifted to the subject of needs that youth felt the Center should address. The most frequently mentioned problem that respondents felt needed attention was lack of employment opportunities (90 percent), followed by counseling (89 percent), school problems (87 percent), low availability of housing (85 percent), and lack of leisure and cultural activities (82 percent) (see Table 7). When asked in which areas the Youth Service Center should concentrate, eight in ten you indicated that all of them should be addressed (see Table 7).

TABLE 6

YOUTH PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE SOUTHWEST YOUTH SERVICE CENTER

(figures in percent)

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	(NUMBER)
Are You Aware of the S.W. Youth Service Center?	79%	21%	0%	100%	(61)
Are You Aware of the Following Services Provided by the Center?					
Counseling	66	10	24	100	(61)
Employment	58	16	26	100	(61)
Diversion	43	31	26	100	(61)
Youth Advocacy	51	33	16	100	(61)

TABLE 7

PERCEIVED YOUTH NEEDS IN S.W. PORTLAND

(figures in percent)

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	(NUMBER)
Which Problems in Your Community Should Be Addressed?					
School	87%	5%	8%	100%	(61)
Employment	90	3	7	100	(61)
Leisure/Culture	82	10	8	100	(61)
Medical Care	80	10	10	100	(61)
Housing	85	7	8	100	(61)
Counseling	89	3	8	100	(61)
Legal Aid	79	11	10	100	(61)
Which Problems Should the S.W. Youth Service Center Address?					
Employment	82	2	16	100	(61)
Leisure/Culture	82	6	12	100	(61)
Medical Care	66	20	14	100	(61)
Housing	82	7	11	100	(61)
Counseling	82	5	13	100	(61)
Legal Aid	84	3	13	100	(61)

TABLE 7

PERCEIVED YOUTH NEEDS IN S.W. PORTLAND

(figures in percent)

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	(NUMBER)
Which Problems in Your Community Should Be Addressed?					
School	87%	5%	8%	100%	(61)
Employment	90	3	7	100	(61)
Leisure/Culture	82	10	8	100	(61)
Medical Care	80	10	10	100	(61)
Housing	85	7	8	100	(61)
Counseling	89	3	8	100	(61)
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Leisure/Culture	82	6	12	100	(61)
Medical Care	66	20	14	100	(61)
Housing	82	7	11	100	(61)
Counseling	82	5	13	100	(61)
Legal Aid	84	3	13	100	(61)

This poses a problem for the Center, for it would be almost impossible to take on these several issues at the same time. Obviously there is a need to set priorities, in terms of program planning.

On the matter of youth involvement in the operation of the Youth Service Center, respondents were quite clear in their feelings. Almost eighty percent of the youth interviewed felt that young people should be employed in the Youth Service Center. More specifically, eight in ten respondents saw a role for youth as counselors in the program, sixty-three percent felt that youth could be involved in the formulation of Center policy, and forty-six percent indicated that youth could share in the management of the program (see Table 8).

Given the strong interest expressed in having youth employed at the Youth Service Center, it would seem that the possibility should be explored of initiating a closer relationship between the Center and the Youth Manpower Program. Through collaboration and planning, it could be possible to hire youth through Youth Manpower and train them for positions as peer counselors, planning assistants, and action group leaders in the Center. The possibilities of this sort of arrangement should be explored as soon as possible.

TABLE 8

ATTITUDES TOWARDS YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN THE S.W. YOUTH SERVICE CENTER

(figures in percent)

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	(NUMBER)
Do You Think Youth Should Be Employed by the Youth Service Center?	79%	8%	13%	100%	(61)
How Should Youth Be Employed?					
As counselors	82	7	11	100	(61)
In management	46	41	13	100	(61)
As policy makers	63	24	13	100	(61)
As custodial help	11	76	13	100	(61)

Summary

The Youth Research Team attempted to cover a wide range of issues and concerns relating to young people in Southwest Portland. An undertaking of such a large scope inevitably runs into problems. In this case the major problem was insufficient time. There was simply not enough time in ten weeks to cover adequately all of the concerns raised by the youth researchers and others. This research report highlights the areas that emerged as most significant. However, it should be stressed that it is only a beginning. There are several areas, such as leisure, recreation, employment, and housing that need to be explored in greater depth. In an ideal situation where there was a permanent, part-time youth research staff, greater attention would be given to the issues that young people identified as important. As it stands, this exploratory research draws the line for a series of studies which could be carried out by students in social studies classes in collaboration with the Youth Service Center. It is hoped that such a possibility might materialize.

Although time constraints were severe, several of the goals of the project were accomplished. It was demonstrated, for example, that a group of youth could be brought together, work as a group, and deal in a constructive way with some very complex social problems. Then too, the attempt to blend education, training, and work into the organization of the research project proved to be successful. The youth researchers not only learned about and performed the tasks involved in social research, but they also gained a better understanding of the political, economic and social aspects of youth problems. It is our hope that experiences such as this one become a regular part of the functioning of youth-serving agencies.

APPENDIX A

THE COMMUNITY-YOUTH NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE

Background Information

1. Age _____ 2. Sex _____ 3. Race ___Caucasion
___Black
___Spanish-American
___Asian-American
___Native American
___Other_____

4. What area of SW Portland do you live in?
___Burlingame ___Fulton Park
___Council Crest ___Corbett
___Hillsdale ___Wilson Park
___Multnomah ___Other _____
(list)

5. What kind of place do you live in? ___House ___Apartment ___Mobile Home
___Hotel ___Duplex ___Condominium ___Houseboat ___Other _____
(list)

6. Do you live at home with your parents (check which parents)? ___Mother
___Father ___Stepmother ___Stepfather ___Other _____(list)

7. What kind of work does your father do?_____

8. What kind of work does your mother do?_____

9. How much education have your parents had?

Father	Mother
___graduate school	___graduate school
___college degree	___college degree
___attended college	___attended college
___high school degree	___high school degree
___attended high school	___attended high school
___grade school	___grade school

School

10. Are you now going to school? ___Yes ___No

11. What school do you attend?_____

12. What grade will you be in next fall? ___7th ___8th ___9th ___10th
___11th ___12th ___College ___Trade school _____
(what will you be studying?)

13. Do you like school? ___Yes ___No What do you like about it?

14. What don't you like about school?

Curriculum

15. In general, how would you describe the required classes being taught in school? (Distinguish between electives and required courses.)

In general, how would you describe the elective classes being taught in school?

16. What would you like to see changed about the courses you are being taught in school? (Changes in electives and required courses)

17. Do you think students should be involved in developing courses at school? ___Yes ___No Why or why not?

18. How do you feel school is helping you to prepare for life? (Is it relevant, is it taking up time until you can start working?

19. Is school helping you to develop your potential as a person? ___Yes ___No
Should it help people develop in other areas like ___art ___crafts ___sports ___drama ___music ___other (list)_____

20. Should school concentrate only on those things which "help you earn a living"? ___Yes ___No

21. Do you think students should be involved in teaching regular high school classes? ___Yes ___No Why or why not?

How?

Discipline

22. Have you ever had a disciplinary problem at school? ___Yes ___No What?

23. Have you ever been suspended? ___Yes ___No For what?_____

24. Have you ever been expelled? ___Yes ___No For what?_____

25. Were you able to present your side of the story in a discipline situation?
___Yes ___No

Should students be able to present their side of a story in a discipline situation?

26. What rules at your school do you think should be kept?

27. Write out the rules at your school you think should be discarded?

28. Do you think that there is too much discipline in school? ___Yes ___No

29. Do you think the present system of discipline is fair? ___Yes ___No
Why or why not?

30. Do you think students are presumed to be guilty until proven innocent?
___Yes ___No

Teacher and Counselors

31. Do you think teachers are interested in students? ___Yes ___No

32. Do you think teachers respect their students? ___Yes ___No If no,
what problems does the lack of respect cause?

33. What kind of a learning situation would you like to be in--feel you do your best work in (i.e., group learning, individual learning, outside school, combination of inside/outside, etc.)?

34. Do you think counselors meet the needs of the students? ___Yes ___No
If no, whose needs are the counselors meeting?

35. Now I would like to ask you some questions about student involvement. Do you think students should be involved in the following? Hiring teachers, __Yes __No; Teacher promotion, __Yes __No; School budget, __Yes __No; Courses offered, __Yes ___No; Textbook selection, __Yes __No; Should students rate teachers as to how well or poorly they are doing their job, __Yes __No; Teacher dismissal, __Yes __No; Other_____ _____ Why?

36. What three things would you change about school?

Social Groups

37. Are students in your school categorized in groups? ___Yes ___No

38. What are the groups called?

39. What group are you a member of?

40. Which of these groups are considered to be "good," which are "bad"?

41. How do people become identified with these groups?

42. Do teachers treat the groups differently? ___Yes ___No How?
Do they expect different things from different groups? ___Yes ___No What?

43. Do you think these social groups affect how well you do in school? ___Yes ___No Explain.

44. Can a student change from one social group to another? __Yes __No
Is it easy? ___Yes ___No

45. Are there racial tensions in your school? ___Yes ___No Why is that?

46. What could be done to help solve these problems?

Police and Youth

47. Do you think that the police treat young people differently than adults? ___Yes ___No How? ____More suspicious ___Hassle young people more ___more protective

48. Would you like to see the policeman's roles in the community change? __Yes __No What should they be doing?

49. Do you think the police wast time bothering to enforce minor laws like curfew, marijuana, alcohol, loitering? ___Yes ___No. Should they concentrate on more serious offenses such as burglary, rape, shooting, etc.? __Yes __No

50. Have you ever been stopped by the police? __Yes __No What was it for?

51. How do you think your police-youth relations could be improved?

52. Have you had any bad experiences with the police?

53. Do you think the police enforce laws dealing with youth differently in different parts of the city? __Yes __No Explain.

Offense Behavior (remind about confidentiality)	No	Yes	Once	Twice	Three Times	Four or More Times
In the past two years have you						
54. taken things worth $10 or less that didn't belong to you?						
55. broken into a place that was locked?						
56. taken a car for a drive without the owner's permission?						
57. damaged public or private property that didn't belong to you just for fun?						
58. beat up on other kids or adults just for fun?						
59. been in a group or gang fight						
60. taken something worth $10 or more that didn't belong to you?						
61. run away from home?						
62. used force to get money away from another person?						
63. used marijuana?						
64. sold marijuana?						
65. skipped school without an excuse?						
66. sniffed glue, or other toxic fumes?						
67. used hard drugs?						
68. sold hard drugs?						
69. used alcohol?						

Health

70. Are you aware of the free local health services (clinics) that are available to young people? ___Yes ___No

71. Have you heard about the V.D. clinic?	__Yes	__No
72. Would you use the V.D. clinic?	__Yes	__No
73. Have you used the V.C. clinic?	__Yes	__No
74. Would you feel comfortable going to the V.D. clinic?	__Yes	__No
75. Have you heard about Outside-In?	__Yes	__No
76. Would you use Outside-In?	__Yes	__No
77. Have you used Outside-In?	__Yes	__No
78. Would you feel comfortable going to Outside-In?	__Yes	__No
79. Have you heard about Planned Parenthood?	__Yes	__No
80. Would you use Planned Parenthood?	__Yes	__No
81. Have you used Planned Parenthood?	__Yes	__No
82. Would you feel comfortable using Planned Parenthood?	__Yes	__No
83. Have you heard about the rape hot line and clinics (such as Holiday Park)?	__Yes	__No
84. Would you use the rape hot line and clinics?	__Yes	__No
85. Have you used the rape hot line and clinics?	__Yes	__No
86. Would you feel comfortable using the rape hot line and clinics?	__Yes	__No
87. Have you heard about the free services at the medical-dental school?	__Yes	__No
88. Would you use the free services at the medical-dental school?	__Yes	__No
89. Have you used the services at the medical-dental school?	__Yes	__No
90. Would you feel comfortable using the services at the medical-dental school?	__Yes	__No
91. Have you heard about the women's clinic in SE Portland?	__Yes	__No
92. Would you use the women's clinic?	__Yes	__No
93. Have you used the women's clinic?	__Yes	__No
94. Would you feel comfortable using the women's clinic?	__Yes	__No
95. Have you heard about the health-mental health clinic at 5th & Ankeny?	__Yes	__No
96. Would you use the health-mental health clinic?	__Yes	__No
97. Have you used the health-mental health clinic?	__Yes	__No
98. Would you feel comfortable using the health-mental health clinic?	__Yes	__No
99. Have you heard about the free food programs such as Fish, Sunshine Division, Life Center?	__Yes	__No
100. Would you use the free food programs?	__Yes	__No
101. Have you used the free food programs?	__Yes	__No
102. Would you feel comfortable using the free food programs?	__Yes	__No
103. Have you heard about the counseling services such as the contact center and the SWYSC	__Yes	__No
104. Would you use these counseling services?	__Yes	__No
105. Have you used these counseling services?	__Yes	__No
106. Would you feel comfortable using these counseling services?	__Yes	__No

107. Have you heard about the alcoholics anonymous and the Alateen programs? __Yes __No
108. Would you use these programs? __Yes __No
109. Have you used these programs? __Yes __No
110. Would you feel comfortable using these programs? __Yes __No

111. Have you heard about the drug treatment services, TADA? __Yes __No
112. Would you use the drug treatment services? __Yes __No
113. Have you used these services? __Yes __No
114. Would you feel comfortable using these services? __Yes __No

115. Do you feel that schools are informing you enough as to what aid is offered? __Yes __No
116. Do you feel that public agencies are informing you enough? __Yes __No
Should they? __Yes __No

117. What are some suggestions as to how to spread this information?

118. Do you have any suggestions as to health services that should be offered but aren't?

Leisure and Cultural Activities

119. What do you like to do in your leisure time? (Read list.) (Check as many as necessary.) __sports __arts and crafts __hobbies __music __theater __parties __goof off __reading __hanging around with friends __volunteer work __go shopping __watch TV __library __other (list)_____

120. Are the public and private facilities adequate to do the things you like to do? ___Yes ___No

121. Do you think there should be more public centers available for crafts, sports, hobbies, music, theater, instructions, doing things? ___Yes ___No

122. Do you think there should be places to go to listen to music or dance? __Yes __No

123. What keeps you from doing the kinds of things you like to do? (Read list.) __lack of money __inadequate facilities __facilities closed too early __facilities closed on weekends, weekdays __facilities understaffed __transportation __closed during the summer __other_____

124. Do you think that schools which have these resources should stay open later as community resources? __Yes __No. During the summer? __Yes __No

125. When places aren't open or you don't have the money, do you resort to other things such as (read list): __getting drunk or stoned __ripping off stuff, vandalism __skipping school Are there any other things to do?

126. Is entertainment a problem in general? ___Yes ___No

127. How do you feel about being restricted from places which you would like to go such as taverns and movies?

128. Should young people be restricted from those places? ____Yes ___No Why?

Housing

129. Are you presently living with your parents? ___Yes ____No

130. If so, are you satisfied with this living arrangement? ___Yes ____No
Would you rather live away from them? ____Yes ___No Why?

131. What keeps you at home, if you would rather live away from home (i.e., money, transportation, etc.)?

132. If you could live away from home what type of problems do you think you would encounter?

133. If you now live away from home was it difficult finding a place to live?
___Yes ___No. What types of problems did you encounter (financial, locating a place, etc.)?

134. What were your reasons for moving away from home?

135. At how many places were you turned down before you found your present home?
__one __two __three __four __five __six __seven or more

136. What were the reasons given for turning you down?

137. Did you have problems signing a contract with the owner or manager? __Yes __No
What were they?

138. What do you think should be done to solve these problems?

139. Do you feel you are a reliable tenant? __Yes __No
140. Do you have trouble paying your rent on time? __Yes __No
141. Do you have trouble paying utility or other bills on time? __Yes __No

General Housing Information

142. Would you rather live in a house or apartment? ____House ____Apartment
Which do you think would be easier to obtain? ____House ____Apartment

143. Do you think there should be more housing available to youth? __Yes __No
144. Do you think there should be programs or agencies available to assist youth in finding housing? __Yes __No

145. Why do you think owners or managers dislike renting to young people?

146. Do you feel that young people who move away from home are able to find only poorer quality housing? ____Yes ____No Why?

147. Do you think that young people are responsible enough to rent or own their own apartments or homes? ____Yes ____No ____Some

148. Do you think it should be possible for young people to move away from home without their parents permission? ____Yes ____No

149. Should young people under 18 be allowed to sign contracts for housing without being discriminated against? ____Yes ____No

150. Should legal aid be available for youths who are refused housing? __Yes __No

Youth Services Centers

151. Are you aware of the SWYSC? ____Yes ____No

Are you aware of the following services provided by the SWYSC?
152. Counseling ___Yes ___No
153. Employment ___Yes ___No
154. Diversion from courts for status offenses (runaway, curfew) ___Yes __No
155. Diversion from courts for more serious offenses ___Yes __No
156. Youth Advocacy (explain advocacy if necessary) ___Yes __No

157. How do you describe the youths who come to the SWYSC (Socially, economically, psychologically, behaviorally)?

Which of the following do you think the SWYSC should be doing?

158. Counseling	___Yes	___No	163. Youth advocacy	___Yes	___No
159. Employment	___Yes	___No	164. Medical care	___Yes	___No
160. Diversion	___Yes	___No	165. Housing help	___Yes	___No
161. Recreation	___Yes	___No	166. Legal aid	___Yes	___No
162. Cultural activities	___Yes	___No	Other_____		

To whom should the services of the SWYSC be made available?

167. Only those who are sent there by the courts/police?	___Yes	___No
168. Only those who have problems?	___Yes	___No
169. All youths?	___Yes	___No

Do you know of a place or places where you can get assistance with problems in the following areas:

170. School (dissatisfaction with courses, teachers, discipline)	___Yes	___No
171. Employment (no jobs, disputes with employers, unsafe wor.)	___Yes	___No
172. Leisure and cultural activities	___Yes	___No
173. Medical care	___Yes	___No
174. Housing	___Yes	___No
175. Counseling	___Yes	___No
176. Legal aid	___Yes	___No

Do you feel there is a need for an agency or agencies to represent, in general, the interests of youths in these areas?

177. School	___Yes	___No	181. Housing	___Yes	___No
178. Employment	___Yes	___No	182. Counseling	___Yes	___No
179. Leisure and cultural activities	___Yes	___No	183. Legal aid	___Yes	___No
180. Medical care	___Yes	___No			

184. Should there be services like these located in each community?	___Yes	___No
185. Have you ever used the SWYSC?	___Yes	___No

186. How did you come into contact with the SWYSC?

187. What types of services did you get from the SWYSC? __Counseling __Employment __Recreation __Diversion __Cultural

188. Do you think that young people in general have interests and problems which are not being dealt with by the centers? ___Yes ___No Explain.

189. Do you think that young people should be employed by the SWYSC? ___Yes ___No

Do you think that young people should be employed in the following:

190. In managing the YSC?	___Yes	___No
191. In helping young people (counseling)?	___Yes	___No
192. In forming policy?	___Yes	___No
193. In custodial positions only?	___Yes	___No

Employment and Counseling

194. Have you ever been to your high school counselor? ___Yes __No

195. Could you tell me what came out of the meeting (what was said, etc.)?

196. What kinds of jobs did the counselor point you to?

197. Did they make distinctions to you as to what are jobs for men and for women?
____Yes ____No

198. Did they make distinctions about what you would be able to do, based on your parents ability to help you? ____Yes ___No

For Those Working

199. Are you working? _____Yes ____No

200. What kind of work are you doing?

201. How long have you been doing this job? __less than one month __one to six months __six months to one year __more than one year __more than two years __more than three years __more than four years

202. What are the weekly hours you work? __five or less __six through ten __11 through 20 __21 through 30 __31 through 40 __41 through 50 __more than fifty

203. What are your hourly wages?_____

204. How did you find this job? __by asking around __by contacting prospective employers __YSC __Oregon employment service __friends __parents __other (list)__ _____

205. Do you believe there is a future in the job you are doing? ___Yes __No
Would you do it for a career? ____Yes ___No

206. What potential is there for you to advance in your job? __a lot __some __none __don't know

207. What is the basis for advancement? __schooling __work experience __ability to do the job __other (list)_____

208. If there is no future in the job, why are you doing it? Check one:
__for the money __until something better comes up
__for the money so I can pursue some other goals such as college, travel

Employer-Employee Relations

210. How do you describe the way you get along with your boss?

211. Does he treat you as a responsible person? ___Yes ____No

212. Does he/she treat older employees differently? ____Yes ____No How?
___More responsible ___Less responsible ___More hassling ___less hassling
___more supervision ___Less supervision

213. Has he/she made his/her job expectations clear? ____Yes ____No

Individual Attitude Towards Work

214. How much do you like your work? __a lot __some __neutral __don't like it
__no opinion Why?

215. What does your job do to or for you?

216. Are you allowed to contribute to decisions about your work? __a lot __some
__neutral __no __no opinion How?

For Those Not Working

217. Are you trying to find a job? ____Yes ___No If no, why?

218. Who have you contacted to help you get a job?

219. How long have you been trying? __a week __week to a month __one month to
three months ___ four months to six months __seven months to a year
__more than a year __more than two years

220. Why have you been unable to find a job?

221. What kind of work would you like to get?

222. What kind of work do you think you can get?

223. What keeps you from getting the kind of work you want?

Careers

224. What kind of work would you like to do for a career?

225. Are the schools helping you to reach those goals?

226. When you find out your goals do you believe you will be able to reach them?
__very likely __likely __50/50 __not likely __no opinion

227. Why do you believe you will or will not be able to achieve the kind of career you want?

228. Do you feel pressured to choose a career? ____Yes ____No By Whom?_____

229. Do you think you should be able to explore different careers?

For Those Not in School

230. Do you plan to continue your education? _____Yes ____No

231. Do you feel education is important to your career goals? ___Yes ____No

232. Is there anyone to help you plan your education or career? ___Yes ___No

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION.